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a fairy which subsequently disappeared carrying his child with it—well, if these things are believable at all they are believable in Mr. Hewlett's version. If the sincere desire to be convinced which the author creates in us could materialize for us the unreal, we should all become seers after one perusal of *The Lore of Proserpine*. But unfortunately we feel a growing inclination to escape from the spell which the book casts upon us. It is as if we were being hypnotized against our will, or as if some strong opiate had been administered to us. After soothing us to pleasant reverie, the narrative produces at last a positive reaction of the nerves.

In philosophizing about the preternatural, Mr. Hewlett explains that spirits, not in themselves visible or tangible or audible, have physical qualities for us merely because they could in no other way become perceptible. When they are unseen they are not unreal, nor when they are seen are they really substantial. Analogously, if we may be permitted to speculate on the author's purpose in writing this strange book, we may conceive him as saying to us: "Such is the quality of my experience, such is the temper of my thought—of what I tend to believe. But if it were not clothed upon with a garment of apparent fact, you could not properly apprehend it."

Altogether, *The Lore of Proserpine* is a fascinating but a rather empty book. Unhappily, it does not ring quite true either as fiction or as subjective fact. Mr. Hewlett really appeals not merely to our imagination, but to our faith—to the highest emotion that poetry or religion knows—and we suspect that he does it rather wantonly. The trick seems hardly legitimate: we feel that we have been led to use a high faculty for a base purpose of amusement, and, if we take the book with the earnestness which it seems to demand, we shall feel at the end as if we had been engaged in some sort of delicate psychic debauch. But to whatever depth we look for truth in this narrative of Mr. Hewlett's we cannot fail to delight in the sweetness and rich suggestiveness of his style.

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A SMALL BOY AND SOME OTHERS. By HENRY JAMES. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.

Admitting heartily the genius of Henry James in his own peculiar and individual field, one cannot help feeling that the outstanding fact concerning his latest work, *A Small Boy and Some Others*, is that autobiography written Henry-James fashion is very teasing. Here we have, as in his novels, endless impressions, wonderful felicities of phrase, but no perspective, no apparent progress in time, little substantial reality for the mind to cling to. Undoubtedly there is a legitimate fascination in this fine mosaic of suggestions. The reader has now and then an experience like that of watching the development of a photographic plate. Of a sudden, a thing that seemed all meaningless blotches of light and shade, a mere glimmering surface spotted with shadows, is transformed magically into a familiar scene. This is a pleasure worth considerable effort—the pleasure which the mind takes in divining reality beneath perversely flashing and colorful impressions, as the eye divines distance and substance in flat surfaces. But in the end, since we are required to imagine practically all the reality for ourselves, the

strain upon the constructive faculty becomes rather too great. "Mild apparitionism" is the phrase that the author uses to characterize the images he calls up, and the phrase fits. We are haunted, throughout the book, with the atmosphere of old New York, but it never becomes appreciably thick; we are haunted by intimations of character as fragmentary as messages from the spirit world: we see, in short, the grin of the Cheshire Cat without the cat. Most disappointing of all, the youthful William James hovers through the narrative as the most illusory of ghosts.

We catch, indeed, here and there among the impressions, hints of active influences. Such an influence was evidently The Bookstore, which "enriched the brave depths of Broadway." Here, the author tells us, he became "prematurely poisoned"—infected, that is, with the virus of English associations. The place was "overwhelmingly and irresistibly English, as not less tonically English was our principal host there, with whom we had, moreover, my father and I, thanks to his office, such personal and genial relations that I recall seeing him grace our board at home, in company with his wife, whose vocal strains and complexion and coiffure and flounces I found none the less informing, none the less 'racial' for my not being then versed in the language of analysis." And the influence was strengthened by the conversational references of his parents to a happy time spent in and about London, creating, we gather, one of those vivid conceptions of the unknown.

Again we become clearly aware of a step in the author's development, in a passage describing a youthful attendance at a performance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"—"where the point exactly was that we attended the spectacle just in order *not* to be beguiled, just in order to enjoy with ironic detachment, and, at the very most, to be amused ourselves at our sensibility, should it prove to have been trapped and caught."

There are, moreover, in the book some rather finely substantial descriptions of character—we catch a satisfactory glimpse of General Winfield Scott, and Thackeray fairly materializes before us for an instant none too long. No one can read the narrative without encountering some delightful realizations of feeling or point of view, as in the following scrap of child psychology, which has reference to a group of generally orphaned cousins: "I think my first childish conception of the enviable lot, formed amid these associations, was to be so little fathered or mothered, so little sunk in the short range, that the romance of life seemed to lie in some constant improvisation by vague overhanging authorities of new situations and horizons."

But in general the author's method is not such as to lead to pleasurable realizations. It seems, indeed, less sympathetic than dryly scientific, producing, by an inevitable process, impressions faint and painfully exact, without further aim or significance; so that in the end we are in the strange condition of not being able to tell what we have learned, or gained, by reading the book, without quoting it entire.

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NOTE.—Through an inadvertence in the May issue of the REVIEW, Paul E. More's *The Drift of Romanticism*, VIII. Shelburne Essays, was noted as published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. It should read Houghton, Mifflin Company.